



Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Israel

Human Rights Watch

October 2022

Summary

Israel's serious human rights abuses, in particular those committed against Palestinians, have worsened since its last Universal Periodic Review in 2018. In April 2021, Human Rights Watch concluded in a 213-page [report](#) that Israeli authorities are committing the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution against millions of Palestinians. Human Rights Watch reached this determination based on a finding of an overarching Israeli government policy to maintain the domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians across Israel and the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territory), and grave abuses committed against Palestinians living in the OPT, including East Jerusalem.

Illegal Settlements and Widespread Confiscation of Land from Palestinians

In its last UPR review of Israel in 2018, a number of states recommended that Israeli authorities cease building settlements in the occupied West Bank. However, Israeli authorities have continued to methodically expand settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to facilitate the transfer of Israeli citizens into the settlements in violation of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which bars an occupying power's transfer of its civilians to occupied territory. Human Rights Watch's submission to the UPR ahead of the January 2018 review noted the presence of approximately 580,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank;¹ as of October 2022, there are about 700,000.²

Settlement expansion has continued unabated, despite changes in the composition of the Israeli government. According to the Israeli group Peace Now, the coalition government led by Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid advanced plans for 7,292 housing units in settlements in the year between taking office and late June 2022, a 26 percent increase as compared to the annual average during the period of the Netanyahu governments between 2012 and 2020.³

To establish and expand its settlement enterprise, Israeli authorities have unlawfully confiscated much of the land in the West Bank from Palestinians. The Israeli human rights organizations B'Tselem and Kerem Navot have found that Israeli authorities have confiscated more than 2 million dunams of land, making up more than one-third of the West Bank, including tens of thousands of dunams that they acknowledge are privately owned by

¹ Human Rights Watch, *Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Israel: 29th session of the Universal Periodic Review, January 2018*, June 29, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/29/submission-universal-periodic-review-israel>.

² Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), "Localities (1) and Population, By Population Group, District, Sub-District and Natural Region," (Hebrew and English), September 15, 2022; Peace Now, "Jerusalem," <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/jerusalem> (accessed October 10, 2022).

³ Peace Now, "The government of unequivocal annexation: One year of the Bennett-Lapid Government," June 23, 2022, <https://peacenow.org.il/en/the-first-year-of-the-bennett-lapid-government> (accessed October 10, 2022).

Palestinians.⁴

Israeli authorities have used several different legal instruments to confiscate land, as Human Rights Watch has documented.⁵ One common tactic they have used is to declare territory, including privately-owned Palestinian land, as “state land.” Peace Now estimates that the Israeli government has designated about 1.4 million dunams of land, or about a quarter of the West Bank, as state land.⁶ The group has also found that more than 30 percent of the land used for settlements is acknowledged by the Israeli government as having been privately owned by Palestinians.⁷ Of the more than 675,000 dunams of state land that Israeli authorities have allocated for use by third parties in the West Bank, they have earmarked more than 99 percent for use by Israeli civilians, according to government data.⁸ Land grabs for settlements and the infrastructure that primarily serves settlers effectively concentrate Palestinians in the West Bank, according to B’Tselem, into “165 non-contiguous ‘territorial islands.’”⁹

Settlements lie at the hearts of Israeli authorities’ crimes of apartheid and persecution. Israel applies Israeli civil law to settlers, affording them legal protections, rights, and benefits that it does not extend to Palestinians living in the same territory, who are subject to Israeli military law. Israel provides settlers with infrastructure, services, and subsidies that it denies to Palestinians, creating and sustaining a separate and unequal system of law, rules, and services.

Recommendations

- Cease construction and expansion of settlements, dismantle existing settlements, and bring Israeli citizens inhabiting settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, back within Israel’s internationally recognized borders.
- Accept that human rights prohibitions against discrimination, including with regard to the rights to housing, education, medical care, freedom of movement, access to water and other rights, apply to Israel’s actions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and fully respect the human rights of Palestinians in the OPT, as well as the protections owed them as an occupied population under international humanitarian law.
- Dismantle all forms of systematic oppression and discrimination that privilege Jewish Israelis at the expense of Palestinians and otherwise systematically violate Palestinian rights in order to ensure the dominance of Jewish Israelis, and end the persecution of

⁴ B’Tselem and Kerem Navot, “This Is Ours – And This, Too: Israel’s Settlement Policy in the West Bank,” March 2021, https://f35bf8a1-b11c-4b7a-ba04-05c1ffae0108.filesusr.com/ugd/a76eb4_ce24a5c07d134e3191887acff5aabd84.pdf (accessed March 23, 2021); Yotam Berger, “Israeli Settlers ‘Upgrade’ West Bank Springs to Usurp Palestinian Land,” *Haaretz*, May 31, 2019, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-israeli-settlers-upgrade-west-bank-springs-to-usurp-palestinian-land-1.7309122> (accessed May 2, 2020); “Settlements,” B’Tselem, updated January 16, 2019, <https://www.btselem.org/settlements> (accessed June 4, 2020).

⁵ Human Rights Watch, *A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution*, April 27, 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>.

⁶ Peace Now, “State Land Allocation in the West Bank — For Israelis Only,” July 17, 2018, <https://peacenow.org.il/en/state-land-allocation-west-bank-israelis> (accessed October 10, 2022).

⁷ Steven Erlanger, “West Bank Sites on Private Land, Data Shows,” *New York Times*, March 14, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/14/world/middleeast/14israel.html> (accessed May 2, 2020); Peace Now, “Breaking the Law in the West Bank, One Violation Leads to another: Israeli Settlement Building on Private Palestinian Property,” October 2006, https://peacenow.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Breaking_The_Law_in_WB_nov06Eng.pdf (accessed May 2, 2020).

⁸ Peace Now, “State Land Allocation in the West Bank-for Israelis Only.”

⁹ B’Tselem, “Expel and Exploit, the Israeli Practice of Taking Over Rural Palestinian Land,” December 2016, https://www.btselem.org/download/201612_expel_and_exploit_eng.pdf (accessed May 2, 2020), p. 16.

Palestinians and afford Palestinians treatment that is at least equal to that afforded to settlers, as well as the protections owed to them as an occupied population

- Cease providing financial incentives, including subsidies for development costs in settlements and lower tax rates, to Israeli and international businesses located in the occupied West Bank.

Sweeping Movement Restrictions Against Palestinians

Israeli authorities continue to impose sweeping restrictions on the movement of the more than 4.8 million Palestinians in the OPT that fail any reasonable test of balancing Israel's security against the human right to freedom of movement.

Closure of Gaza

For the last 25 years, Israel has increasingly restricted the movement of Gaza residents. Since 2007, the year that Hamas seized effective political control over the Strip from the Fatah-led PA, Israel has imposed a generalized travel ban on movement in and out of the small territory with few exceptions. The Israeli army since 2007 has limited travel through the Erez Crossing, the passenger crossing from Gaza to the other part of the OPT, the West Bank, and abroad, as well as to Israel. Israel has limited passage to cases presenting what it deems "exceptional humanitarian circumstances," meaning mainly those needing vital medical treatment outside Gaza and their companions, although authorities also grant permits each year to hundreds of Gaza residents eligible on other grounds, such as businesspeople and laborers.¹⁰

Most Gaza residents do not fit within these exemptions. For the five-year period between January 2015 and December 2019, before the onset of Covid-19 restrictions, an average of about 373 Palestinian exited Gaza via Erez each day, less than 1.5 percent the daily average of 26,000 in September 2000, before the closure, according to the Israeli rights group Gisha.¹¹ After tightening the closure amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the monthly averages have increased in 2022, driven by permits issued for thousands of Palestinians in Gaza to work in construction and agriculture, but remain less than 5 percent the daily average in September 2000.¹² Most Palestinians who grew up under this closure have never exited the 40-by-9 km (25-by-7 mile) Gaza Strip.

Israel restricts all travel between Gaza and the West Bank, despite its having recognized the two to be part of a single territorial unit,¹³ even when the travel takes place via the circuitous route through Egypt and Jordan rather than through Israeli territory. The closure deprives Gaza residents of opportunities to better their lives and contributes to violations of other rights, including the right to family reunification, and the rights to access healthcare, education, and

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Unwilling or Unable: Israeli Restrictions on Access to and from Gaza for Human Rights Workers*, April 2, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/04/02/unwilling-or-unable/israeli-restrictions-access-and-gaza-human-rights-workers>.

¹¹ Data from Gisha on file with Human Rights Watch.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement (Oslo II), September 28, 1995, art. 31.

economic opportunities.¹⁴

Israeli authorities also sharply restrict the entry and exit of goods, which has devastated the economy in Gaza.¹⁵ About 80 percent of Gaza's 2.1 million residents rely on humanitarian aid, according to UNRWA.¹⁶

These restrictions violate the rights of Palestinians to freedom of movement and residence, in particular within the OPT, and the right to leave one own's country, that Israel can restrict only in response to concrete, specific security threats. Israel's policy, though, presumptively denies free movement to people in Gaza, with narrow exceptions, irrespective of any individualized assessment of the security risk a person may pose. These restrictions on the right to freedom of movement do not meet the requirement of being strictly necessary and proportionate to achieve a lawful objective. Israel has had years and many opportunities to develop more narrowly tailored responses to security threats that minimize restrictions on rights.

Recommendations

- End the generalized ban on travel to and from Gaza and permit the free movement of people to and from Gaza, and in particular between Gaza and the West Bank, and abroad, subject to, at most, individual screenings and physical searches for security purposes.
- Permit Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to move freely into East Jerusalem, subject to, at most, individual screenings and physical searches for security purposes.
- Halt construction of the Separation Barrier inside the West Bank and dismantle the segments of the barrier not built along the Green Line.

Unlawful killings and war crimes without accountability

Israeli forces stationed on the Israeli side of the fences separating Gaza and Israel responded with excessive lethal force to weekly demonstrations for Palestinian rights on the Gaza side that took place for much of 2018 and 2019. Snipers killed, according to OCHA, 214 Palestinian demonstrators, many of them more than one hundred meters away, and injured by live fire more than 8,000 more, including 156 whose limbs had to be amputated.¹⁷ As a UN Commission

¹⁴ "Gaza: Israel's 'Open-Air Prison' at 15," Human Rights Watch news release, June 14, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15>; B'Tselem and HaMoked, "So Near and Yet So Far: Implications of Israeli-Imposed Seclusion of the Gaza Strip on Palestinians' Right to Family Life," January 2014, http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/201401_so_near_and_yet_so_far_eng.pdf (accessed September 2, 2020); Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), "Actual Strangulation and Deceptive Facilitation," March 2016, <http://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=7962> (accessed September 2, 2020) pp. 31-33; Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, "#Denied: Harassment of Palestinian Patients Applying for Exit Permits," June 2015, <http://cdn2.phr.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Denied-2015-New-Report.pdf> (accessed September 2, 2020); Gisha, "Student Travel Between Gaza and the West Bank 101," September 2012, <http://www.gisha.org/UserFiles/File/publications/students/students-2012-eng.pdf> (accessed September 2, 2020).

¹⁵ See Gisha, "A Costly Divide: Economic Repercussions of Separating Gaza and the West Bank," February 2015, http://gisha.org/UserFiles/File/publications/a_costly_divide/a_costly_divide_en-web.pdf (accessed June 4, 2020).

¹⁶ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), "Where We Work: Gaza Strip," <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip> (accessed October 10, 2022).

¹⁷ "Two Years On: People Injured and Traumatized During 'Great March of Return' Still Struggling" April 6, 2020, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/two-years-people-injured-and-traumatized-during-great-march-return-are-still-struggling#ftn3> (accessed September 2, 2020).

of Inquiry put it, Israeli forces shot at “unarmed protesters, children and disabled persons, and at health workers and journalists performing their duties, knowing who they are.”¹⁸ The commissioners concluded that, while demonstrations were “at times violent,” in 187 of the 189 killings that took place in 2018, protesters did not pose an imminent threat to life and Israel used “neither necessary nor proportional” force.¹⁹ Snipers followed orders from senior officials that sanctioned using live ammunition on Palestinians who approached or attempted to cross or damage fences between Gaza and Israel regardless of whether they posed an imminent threat to life. Human Rights Watch did not investigate every case, but found that Israeli forces repeatedly fired on protesters who posed no imminent threat to life, pursuant to expansive open-fire orders from senior officials that contravene international human rights law standards.²⁰

Israeli forces also continue to regularly use excessive force in policing contexts in the West Bank.²¹ Israeli authorities had killed 88 Palestinians in the West Bank in 2022, including 18 children, as of September 30, according to OCHA, six-year-high.²² In April, then Prime Minister Bennett declared that there would be “no restrictions” on Israeli forces actions, following several attacks by Palestinians inside Israel the prior month.²³ In May, renowned Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqla was shot to death during an Israeli raid in the northern West Bank. Multiple independent investigations point to Israeli forces having killed her.²⁴ Others killed during the review period include demonstrators, rock-throwers, suspected assailants, and bystanders, including an unarmed mother-of-six gunned down at a checkpoint.²⁵

Israeli authorities have also engaged in several rounds of hostilities with Palestinian armed groups in Gaza in recent years. During the 11 days of hostilities that began on May 10, 2021, 260 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, including at least 129 civilians and 66 children, according to UN figures.²⁶ Human Rights Watch documented during the escalation war crimes, including Israeli strikes that killed scores of civilians - wiping out entire families - and destroyed four high-

¹⁸ “UN Commission urges Israel to review rules of engagement before Gaza protest anniversary,” UN HRC news release, March 18, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=24348&LangID=E> (accessed September 2, 2020).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Israel: Apparent War Crimes in Gaza,” Human Rights Watch news release, June 13, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/13/israel-apparent-war-crimes-gaza>; “Israel: Gaza Killings Unlawful, Calculated,” Human Rights Watch news release, April 3, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/04/03/israel-gaza-killings-unlawful-calculated>.

²¹ See, e.g., “Israel: Release Body of Slain Palestinian,” Human Rights Watch news release, September 14, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/14/israel-release-body-slain-palestinian>.

²² UN OCHA, “Protection of Civilians Report | 13-26 September 2022,” September 30, 2022, <https://www.ochaopt.org/poc/13-26-september-2022> (accessed October 10, 2022).

²³ “Bennett Says Tel Aviv Had Help, Vows ‘No Restrictions’ on Israeli Response,” Times of Israel, April 8, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-says-tel-aviv-terrorist-had-help-vows-no-restrictions-on-israeli-response/> (accessed October 10, 2022).

²⁴ See, e.g., United Nations Human Rights: Office of the High Commissioner, “Killing of Journalist in the occupied Palestinian Territory,” June 24, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2022/06/killing-journalist-occupied-palestinian-territory> (accessed October 10, 2022).

²⁵ Tia Goldberg, “Israeli troops shoot dead unarmed Palestinian woman in West Bank amid rising tensions during Ramadan,” Associated Press, April 11, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/bennett-says-tel-aviv-terrorist-had-help-vows-no-restrictions-on-israeli-response/> (accessed October 10, 2022).

²⁶ UN OCHA, “Response to the Escalation in the oPt | Situation Report No. 5 (18-24 June 2021),” June 25, 2021, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/response-escalation-opt-situation-report-no-5-18-24-june-2021> (accessed October 10, 2022).

rise Gaza towers full of homes and businesses, with no evident military targets in the vicinity.²⁷ Most recently, three days of fighting in August 2022 resulted in the killing of 49 Palestinians, including 17 children.²⁸

Israeli authorities have also consistently failed to credibly investigate abuses its forces carry out and to hold those responsible to accountable.²⁹ Even in the high-profile killing of Shireen Abu Aqla, Israeli authorities, while acknowledging that an Israeli soldier likely killed her, said it was accidental and that there would be no criminal probe into the matter.³⁰

Recommendations

- Issue clear directives publicly and privately to all security forces that prohibit the use of lethal force except in situations where it is necessary to prevent an imminent threat to death or serious injury.
- Refrain from indiscriminate and deliberate attacks on civilians or use of excessive and disproportionate force during hostilities.
- Ensure adequate steps by law enforcement authorities to investigate and prosecute Israeli settlers who attack Palestinians or their property.

Forced displacement and Denial of Residency Rights to Palestinians

During its 2018 UPR review, states called on Israeli authorities to cease the demolition of homes and other policies that led to the forcible transfer and displacement of Palestinians. Israeli authorities, however, have doubled down on these policies. Between January 2018 and September 2022, Israeli authorities demolished 3,535 Palestinian homes and other structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 4,353 people, according to OCHA.³¹

Most structures were demolished for lacking building permits, which authorities make nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain in the roughly 60 percent of the West Bank under full Israeli control (Area C) and in East Jerusalem.³² These discriminatory measures effectively force Palestinians to leave their homes or to build at the risk of having their “unauthorized” structures bulldozed. Israeli authorities have also punitively demolished the homes of families of Palestinians suspected of attacking Israelis, even though international humanitarian law prohibits such collective punishment.³³ International humanitarian law prohibits an occupying

²⁷ “Gaza: Apparent War Crimes During May Fighting,” Human Rights Watch news release, July 27, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/27/gaza-apparent-war-crimes-during-may-fighting>; “Gaza: Israel’s May Airstrikes on High-Rises,” Human Rights Watch news release, August 23, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/23/gaza-israels-may-airstrikes-high-rises>.

²⁸ UN OCHA, “Protection of Civilians Report | 2-15 August 2022,” August 19, 2022, <https://www.ochaopt.org/poc/2-15-august-2022> (accessed October 10, 2022).

²⁹ See, e.g., B’Tselem, “Whitewash Protocol: The So-Called Investigation of Operation Protective Edge,” September 2016, https://www.btselem.org/download/201609_whitewash_protocol_eng.pdf (accessed June 4, 2020).

³⁰ Israeli Defense Forces, “Final Conclusions from the Investigation into the Shooting Incident which Resulted in the Death of Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh,” September 5, 2022, <https://idfanc.activetrail.biz/ANC0509202205> (accessed October 10, 2022).

³¹ OCHA, “Breakdown of Data on Demolition and Displacement in the West Bank,” <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoimMkZGRhYWQtODk0MS00MwJkLWI2NTktMDg1NGJlMGNiY2Y3liwidCl6ljbmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MCIzGNjLTVIYtQxNmU2ZGM3MCIslmMiOjh9> (accessed October 10, 2022).

³² Human Rights Watch, *A Threshold Crossed*.

³³ B’Tselem, “House Demolitions: Demolition of houses as punishment,” <https://statistics.btselem.org/en/demolitions/demolition-as-punishment?tab=overview&demoScopeSensor=%22false%22> (accessed October 10, 2022).

property from destroying property unless “absolutely necessary” for “military operations.”³⁴ In May, Israel’s High Court of Justice greenlighted the demolitions of the homes of more than 1,000 Palestinians in Masafer Yatta, in the southern West Bank for being located in a closed firing zone for the Israeli army.³⁵

Israeli authorities apply similarly discriminatory policies towards Palestinian Bedouin citizens of Israel living in the Negev region. Israeli authorities have refused to legally recognize 35 Palestinian Bedouin communities, making it impossible for their 90,000 or so residents to reside lawfully in the communities they have lived in for decades. Instead, authorities have sought to concentrate Bedouin communities in larger recognized townships in order, as expressed in governmental plans and statements by officials, to maximize the land available for Jewish communities. Israeli law considers all buildings in these unrecognized villages to be illegal, and authorities have refused to connect most to the national electricity or water grids or to provide even basic infrastructure such as paved roads or sewage systems. More than 10,000 Bedouin homes have been demolished in the Negev between 2013 and 2019, according to government data.³⁶

Israeli authorities have also used their control over the population registry in the West Bank and Gaza—the list of Palestinians they consider lawful residents for purposes of issuing legal status and identity cards—to deny residency in the OPT to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, largely on the claim that they had been away for too long or when the occupation began in 1967. Israeli authorities have justified these actions by citing general security concerns, but have not conducted individual screenings or claimed that those excluded posed a threat themselves.³⁷

Since 2003, Israeli authorities have also barred, with few exceptions, the granting of long-term legal status inside Israel to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza who marry Israeli citizens or residents. Such a restriction, which has mostly been in place since 2003, does not exist for spouses of virtually any other nationality.³⁸

³⁴ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), adopted August 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 287, entered into force October 21, 1950, art. 54.

³⁵ B’Tselem, “The international community must prevent the forcible transfer of Masafer Yatta communities, approved by Israel’s High court of Justice,” May 5, 2012,

https://www.btselem.org/press_release/20220505_international_community_must_prevent_the_forcible_transfer_of_masafer_yatta_communities_approved_by_hcj (accessed October 10, 2022); OCHA, “Fact sheet: Masafer Yatta communities at risk of forcible transfer | June 2022,” July 6, 2022, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/masafer-yatta-communities-risk-forcible-transfer-june-2022> (accessed October 10, 2022).

³⁶ Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, “On (In)Equality and Demolition of Homes and Structures in Arab Bedouin Communities in the Negev/Naqab,” July 2020, <https://www.dukium.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HDR-2020-Data-on-2019-Eng-3.pdf> (accessed August 18, 2020), p. 14; Almog Ben Zikri, “Bedouin Home Demolitions in Israel Double in 2017,” Haaretz, March 28, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/bedouin-home-demolitions-in-israel-double-in-2017-1.5939858> (accessed May 3, 2020); NCF, The Regional Council for the Unrecognized Villages in the Negev (RCUV) and Alhuquq Center, “The Arab Bedouin indigenous people of the Negev/Naqab – A Short Background,” <https://bit.ly/2YAjsYy> (accessed May 3, 2020).

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, “*Forget About Him, He’s Not Here*,”: *Israel’s Control of Palestinian Residency in the West Bank and Gaza* (New York: Human Rights Watch: 2012) <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iopt0212webwcover.pdf>

³⁸ Israel: Family Reunification Ruling Is Discriminatory,” Human Rights Watch news release, May 17, 2006, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2006/05/17/israel-family-reunification-ruling-discriminatory>

Israel's Interior Ministry has also revoked the legal status of almost 15,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites since 1967, mostly for failing to prove a "center of life" in the city.³⁹

Recommendations

- End discrimination in the application of planning, permit, and building laws and regulations that subject Palestinians to discriminatory permit refusals and demolition orders.
- Provide equitable access to land, housing, and essential services for Palestinians.
- End discrimination in the application of planning, permit, and building laws and regulations that subject Palestinians to discriminatory permit refusals and demolition orders.
- Remove arbitrary restrictions on residency rights for Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip and their families.
- Recognize and honor the right of Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes in 1948 and their descendants to enter Israel and reside in the areas where they or their families once lived.

Escalating attacks on human rights defenders

During its previous UPR in 2018, a number of states recommended that Israeli authorities cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms and allow human rights defenders to carry out their work without hinderance. Israeli authorities, though, have targeted human rights defenders with increasing repression.

Palestinian human rights defenders have for years faced travel bans, army raids and arrest, but have faced an unprecedented repression in recent months.⁴⁰ In October 2021, Israeli authorities outlawed six prominent Palestinian civil society organizations by designating them as "terrorist" organizations under Israeli law and as "illegal" organizations under military law in the occupied West Bank, moves that permit closing their offices, seizing their assets, and jailing their staff and supporters.⁴¹ In August 2022, Israeli authorities raided the offices of and issued closure orders against the groups.⁴²

Recommendations

- Reverse the decision to outlaw the six prominent Palestinian civil society organizations and allow them to continue their vital work.

³⁹ "Israel: Jerusalem Palestinians Stripped of Status," Human Rights Watch news release, August 8, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/08/08/israel-jerusalem-palestinians-stripped-status>.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Khulood Badawi, "Yet Another Military Trial in the Occupied Territories," commentary, Human Rights Watch dispatch, July 16, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/16/yet-another-military-trial-occupied-territories>.

⁴¹ "Israel/Palestine: Designation of Palestinian Rights Groups as Terrorists," Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International news release, October 22, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/22/israel/palestine-designation-palestinian-rights-groups-terrorists>.

⁴² Omar Shakir, "Raising the Alarm: Israel's All-Out Assault on Rights Defenders," commentary, Human Rights Watch dispatch, August 19, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/19/raising-alarm-israels-all-out-assault-rights-defenders>.

- Fully cooperate with UN bodies and human rights mechanisms and other international investigators, including by allowing them access to Israel and the OPT to carry out investigations, and heeding their recommendations to improve the human rights situation.